

THE RED MEN
OF THE WEST

No. 644. *266.7*
R312

[MISSIONARY SERIES.]

THE RED MEN OF THE WEST;

OR,

THE NORTH-AMERICAN INDIANS.



"The dark Americans convert;
And shine in every Pagan heart!"

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
AND SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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OR,

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THE substance of the Gospel was sublimely expressed by the angels at Bethlehem, in their heavenly song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good-will towards men." All those who obey its calls obtain peace with God, and are inspired with a portion of that love which devised and executed the redemption of our fallen race. They love all mankind, and are disposed to exert themselves, and to make sacrifices, to save those who are the most wretched. This is strikingly exemplified in the Christian Missions of the present day. What individuals cannot do singly, is accomplished by combined exertion. The compassions of all are moved in behalf of the perishing. The inquiry is made, "Who shall be our messengers, to carry them the glad tidings of salvation?" Devoted youths, whose hearts God hath touched, are constrained by the love of Christ, each to say, "Here am I, send me." The contributions of the many furnish means for their support; and, in the exercise of self-denying zeal, they go forth in the strength of the Lord God, to make mention of his righteousness. The motive of worldly fame can have no place in their breasts; for they well know that their labours and their success will be alike disregarded by the men of the world. And the motive of wealth is equally out of the question; for, in general, they go to those who are sunk in the depths of poverty and wretchedness: their sole object is to open the blind eyes, and to turn the Gentiles "from darkness

unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Jesus. To accomplish this, they sacrifice home, and all the comforts of civilized life ; they expose themselves to inhospitable, and even deadly, climates ; they endure the privations, and brave the dangers, attendant upon a residence among warlike savages ; they encounter the difficulties of acquiring, and reducing to form, unwritten and barbarous languages ; and they count not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

The difficulties of the Christian Missionary have been greatly increased by the wickedness of Europeans in heathen lands. Many whole tribes have become extinct through the effects of their avarice and licentiousness ; and the misery of others has been awfully increased. The unfavourable prejudices thus produced, added to the natural darkness and depravity of the heathen mind, could never be overcome, were it not that the weapons of the Christian Minister "are not carnal, but mighty through God" to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds. These are, the faithful ministration of the Gospel of Christ, and the patient example of a meek and gentle and holy life.

In no part of the world have the injuries of white men been more deeply and painfully experienced, than among the Red Indians of the western world ; and, till of late, no well-sustained efforts have been made to recompense them with the blessings of the Gospel, for the wrongs so wantonly inflicted upon them. Christian compassion and benevolence, however, have been awakened in their behalf. The messengers of the churches have been sent to tell them of the love of Christ. Hundreds have experienced its saving power, and are witnesses of its peaceful and purifying influence. Several of their Chiefs have not only embraced the faith, but zealously and successfully preached it to others, and have appeared in

the churches of our own land, to advocate the cause of Christian Missions.

A large tract of country in British North-America, including many Indian tribes, belongs to the Honourable the Hudson's Bay Company. In compliance with the request of the Directors of the Company, in the year 1840, the Wesleyan Missionary Committee sent five Missionaries, and one Indian Assistant Missionary, to engage in the religious instruction of the numerous tribes of the aborigines, within and beyond the territories of the Company, and to promote their civilization, and the general amelioration of their condition. The stations which they occupy in that vast wilderness, are situated at distances of from 700 to 2,800 miles from the city of Montreal, stretching even to the Rocky Mountains that approach near to the great Pacific Ocean. They have met with a most cordial reception from the officers in charge at the different establishments which they have visited; a circumstance which, under God, is chiefly to be ascribed to the part which George Simpson, Esq., the Governor-in-Chief, has taken in the matter, and the lively interest he feels for the success of the Mission. This patronage, also, has contributed, in no small degree, to dispose the Indians to attend to the instructions of the Missionaries, and thus to the success with which it has pleased God to crown their labours.

Travelling in those regions is attended with considerable difficulty and danger. The rivers and lakes which lie in the course of the traveller are generally preferred, as affording more open and direct progress than the wilderness; but they abound with ice even till Midsummer; and the frail canoe in which he travels, is often in danger of being crushed between the flakes, or upset in the rapids of the rivers, or by sudden squalls upon the lakes. When the time for encamping at nightfall arrives, every thing is carried on shore at some convenient spot: the sound of the axe echoes through the forest, and the glare of an immense fire soon illumines the surrounding scenery. The evening meal is prepared,

and, after partaking of the bounties of Providence, each wraps himself up in his blanket, and, with no covering but the inverted canoe, lies down to sleep. "I felt," says one of the Missionaries, "a little inconvenience at first, from sleeping with only an oilcloth and a blanket between me and the ground, sometimes on damp and marshy land, and sometimes on a bare rock; but, through the mercy of my heavenly Father, I escaped without taking cold, of which I had been apprehensive."

Their mode of travelling in *winter* is thus described by Mr. Evans :—"December 14th, 1840, I left Norway-House, accompanied by my interpreter and two Indians. In passing the Indian village, the men, women, and children flocked down to the ice, and bade me adieu, while I commended them to God and his grace. I made eight miles of lake-travelling, and three miles in the wilderness, after which I encamped for the night. Our encampment is made by scraping away the snow, cutting a few pine-bushes, and spreading them for a bed; and, by turning before the fire, we can generally keep one side warm at a time. The first thing on arriving, is to unharness the dogs, of which we have seven. The camp is then made, and wood collected for the night. The dogs are fed soon after arriving, and a bed of brush spread for them, when, being weary after their day's travel of from thirty to seventy miles, with a load of from one hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds on each sled, they lie down. Our carriages carry each about three hundred pounds; and are drawn where nothing but dogs could take them, there being no road but through the tangled brake, and over piles of fallen and decaying timber. The sleds and caricoles are nothing more than two half-inch oak-boards, about eight feet long, and seven or eight inches broad, stitched together with thongs of deer-skin, and strengthened with a few light pieces of wood as cross-bars. These sleds, being turned up in front, are drawn over logs and other impediments, but not without frequent assistance from the driver. Our supper con-

sists of some venison-balls. These are made by chopping the meat, and mixing with it a little tallow. I need scarcely say that these are frozen ; for our milk we carry in a bag, breaking off pieces as we require it."

The cold here is excessive. The same Missionary writes :—"January 4th, 1841, I left Cumberland-House : thermometer 18° below zero ; the wind blowing strong in our faces, with fine sharp snow. I made the old encampment at dark. I slept, but was very cold. It was snowing hard all night. At one o'clock Thomas awoke me by shaking off the load of snow from my blanket. I roused myself, and started at two A.M." January 19th, he again writes,—"Thermometer 42° below zero. It is excessively cold. Water from the tea-kettle, nearly boiling, being poured into a tin plate to the depth of about half-an-inch, became frozen and solid, or sufficiently so, to slide out when warmed on the under side, in seven minutes and a half."

The Indians are called by various names, but the language is radically the same throughout a vast extent of country. The Ojibewa is of most importance, and is very difficult of acquisition,—so difficult, that but very few foreigners have ever spoken it fluently. Several of the Missionaries sent among them have, however, acquired considerable acquaintance with it. One of them, particularly, after the labour of seven or eight years' close study, can speak it with such ease and accuracy, that the Indians describe him as a red man in a white skin. The acquirement of the language is of course necessary to their being well instructed in Christianity. Without this, books cannot be made available ; and the disadvantage of employing an interpreter in preaching is considerable. Having surmounted the difficulty of the language, the Missionaries are actively employed in translating various portions of the Scripture and hymns ; and, after much pains, and overcoming many difficulties, one of them has succeeded in casting type for printing, in the Cree language, and, at the date of his last accounts, had actually printed about two thousand pages, and had the pleasure of seeing

many of the Indians and their children read with considerable fluency, and some of them also able to write with ease and correctness. Thus means are adopted to lay a good foundation for the perpetuity of Christianity among them, by enabling them to read, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God.

In some parts the Missionaries meet with considerable difficulties from the attachment of the natives to their ancient superstitions and modes of life,—but especially from Popish emissaries, who have found their way among them: for Popery, in all its forms, (and it has many,) is antagonist to the saving truths of Christianity. When this is presented *first* to those Indians who are disposed in favour of the white man's religion, as it requires no moral change, either in heart or life, and only transfers their worship from one set of idols to another, and their obedience from the conjuror to the Priest,—they readily embrace it, and enter heartily into all the bigoted feelings peculiar to that corrupt system. The vastly superior moral and civilizing effects of the Protestant Mission, and the free circulation of the word of God, will, however, not fail to counteract the efforts of Popery, and dispose the deceived natives to hail with gratitude the teachers of our most holy faith. In other parts of the country, the cordial reception of the Missionaries, and the success of their labours, will appear from the following extracts:—

From Norway-House, which is 2,000 miles inland from Montreal, Mr. Rundle writes:—"June 14th, 1840, I addressed the Indians for the first time this afternoon through the medium of an interpreter. Great was the attention they manifested, whilst I unfolded to them the plan of redeeming love. About one hundred Indians and half-castes were present. After the service I baptized a native infant, who was sick, and whose father told me, through the interpreter, that he was very desirous of being instructed in the Christian religion. In the evening, I went with the interpreter across the river to meet the Indians in their own village. I believe that

nearly every grown up person in the place was present at the service, and I think their attention this evening exceeded that in the afternoon. I spoke to-night more fully on the nature of the salvation which I had to offer them, and never shall I forget the events of that evening. While engaged in prayer, I was visited with such a delightful influence of the Holy Spirit as seemed to indicate that God had fixed his approving seal on my proceedings. After service, three adult candidates presented themselves for baptism, and a mother presented an infant for the same purpose. But as I wished them to be further instructed in the things of God, I declined complying with their request for a season.

Tuesday, 23d.—I met the Indians again this evening. They prefer the word of life to any thing else. It is quite a privilege to visit this interesting village: How eagerly did they listen to the story of the cross! What an exemplification we have here of the words of our Saviour, 'When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me!' Yes, blessed Saviour, the sight of thy cross, unveiled by the Spirit, is a death to every vice! May all these sons and daughters of the forest feel its power, and

'Sink, by dying love compell'd,
And own Thee Conqueror.'

"July 16th.—To-day an old Indian, named Wuch-e-can, about seventy-five years of age, called on me, to be instructed in the Christian religion. I found, on conversing with him, that he had been wrought upon by the Spirit of God, the *first* time I visited the village. 'I thought then,' he said, 'that my heart opened, and I could not help shedding tears. The wish of my heart was, that God would have mercy upon me,—save me from the danger I was in, and take me to heaven. But ever since, my heart has been hard, and I want to get it softened. I knew, before you came, that there was a great Being that dwelt in heaven, and that he was everywhere present, and also, that he beheld all the sins

that man committed ; but I have sinned against him, and I wish for his forgiveness.' In the evening, I baptized him and his wife, and afterwards married them.

"July 17th.—In the evening, I discoursed at the village, on the resurrection of Lazarus, and had a most interesting service. I had proceeded to the part of this sacred narrative in which the Saviour calls forth Lazarus from the grave, when a memorable scene ensued. 'Lazarus, come forth!' said I. '*Lazarus, astum o i tah!*' twice repeated the interpreter, who caught the flame which was kindling in the meeting. Seeing the effect it had produced, and feeling its force in my own soul, I said, 'Repeat it again : ' '*Lazarus astum on tah!*' repeated the interpreter, with renewed energy. The effect was thrilling ; a deep feeling pervaded all present. It was the same as if the mighty Conqueror of the grave was present, and calling us personally to participate in his triumph. At the close of the meeting I observed a female in great distress : she was in tears, with her head resting on her knees. On observing her thus, I said I should be glad to give her some advice ; when she instantly rose from her seat, and came near me. On her countenance were deeply depicted the signs of penitential sorrow, which, with her long flowing hair falling in dishevelled locks over her finely-formed features, reminded me very forcibly of her, of whom it is said, that she washed the feet of her Saviour with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. 'Why do you weep?' said I. 'Because,' said she, 'your words have cut me to the heart, and I feel my sins pressing heavily upon me, and I cannot help shedding tears.' She also said, that her distress had been so great of late, as to prevent her taking rest by night, unless when her fancy brought before her view a Bible, on which she rested her eyes, and so soothed her tempest-tossed spirit. 'Do you feel yourself a lost sinner?' she was asked. 'Yes,' said she. 'Do you feel that you need a Saviour?' 'Yes,' she again replied. I then pointed her to 'the

Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world,' and exhorted her to believe on him for a present salvation; but, with all my advice and counsel, Flora Wesley (for that is her new name) left that night, suffering under the anguish of a wounded spirit. 'The Comforter,' however, was only delaying his coming for a short time.

"Sunday, July 19th.—What a memorable day has this been! Surely the Lord is with me. This morning I preached at the fort, on 'the new and living way.' In the afternoon and evening I held Indian services, and particularly addressed the seekers of salvation. In the evening we first interpreted, and then sung, the first six verses of that beautiful hymn,—

'I thirst, thou wounded Lamb of God.'

I thought several present were affected; and I invited those that were so to come forward, in order that I might give them some advice. Immediately eight persons came near me; and their expressions of penitential sorrow reminded me forcibly of by-gone scenes in England. Shortly after, the number of penitents was increased to twelve. I talked to them about the great love and power of Christ, and exhorted them all to come to him to be saved. Surely, the wilderness is blossoming like the rose!

"July 21st.—Several this evening appeared in great spiritual distress. Amongst others was Flora Wesley; no longer, however, a weeping, disconsolate penitent, but a happy believer in Jesus. Yes, Flora was in possession of 'that peace which passeth all understanding.' She said she had followed my advice; and that, for some time before the change took place, she had been constantly praying. About noon on the preceding day, she retired to the woods, and whilst on her knees, praying to Jesus, she was filled with a transport of joy. 'Do you feel,' said I, 'that you have found mercy?' 'Yes,' she replied; 'and when I think on my Saviour, my heart is glad.' 'Would you now be afraid to die?'

'No,' said she : 'when first I thought of death, I was filled with fear ; but now the fear is taken away, because I feel in my heart that I love Jesus, and that he loves me.' 'I thought,' added she, 'that I loved my husband better than any thing else, and I loved him as myself; and when he was absent, my thoughts were constantly on him. But now, I love Christ better than any thing beside. He is constantly in my thoughts : even when I sit down to meals, I am thinking on him.' Thus genuine conviction and conversion are the same in every place.

"July 24th.—Amongst the penitents to-night, I observed an old man of about seventy-five, another man about forty, and a young girl about twelve. Thus the Gospel triumphs ! How it delights my soul to be amongst them !"

From the same place, October 4th of the following year, (1841,) Mr. Evans writes as follows :—"This evening, after preaching, I met a class ; and the clear and spiritual testimony of several of these lately poor and benighted sons of the forest, was heart-cheering, and of the most encouraging nature. One man spoke as follows :—'Last summer I visited Red River, when, for the first time, I heard the news of these good words. I felt that I was a great sinner, and that I was in darkness, and in the broad road to eternal punishment. I learned very little. I heard that I must pray to the great Spirit through his Son, whose name I could not remember, although I tried very-much to do so. I came home. I went often back there into the swamp, and cried very much. O, my heart was very, very heavy ! I tried often to pray to the great Spirit to pity me, a poor Indian. I said, Great Spirit, I hear that you wish to save the poor sinners : I wish to pray, but I do not know your Son's name. O pity me, and forgive all my sins, and crooked life !' He added, 'I had no Minister here at that time to teach me, as we now have : and I often wept much when we went to bed, and could not sleep, because I had no one to teach me. The great Spirit did pity me ;

for when we had no Minister, he sent me a dream that encouraged me much. One night last winter I dreamed that I saw two roads: one was very wide, and full of white people and Indians; they were very wicked, swearing and fighting:—the other road was only a foot-path; and I saw only very few persons following each other's trail: some were singing; and they went very fast, and looked very happy. I prayed in my sleep, that the great Spirit would let me go with them. When I awoke, I thanked him for this dream. *O now I have more than a dream to bless me!* O yes. I have my poor heart cheered by the *good words*. When I pray, I am so very happy! O, I cannot tell how much I am blessed! I love the Son of God, Jesus Christ: I shall never more forget his great name! I am very happy to-day!' Here tears of joy stopped his simple story; and his heaving bosom and cheerful countenance told what he could not utter."

Mr. Rundle (from whose journal some extracts have already been made) now occupies the most westerly position occupied by these Missions, and is in the immediate vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. The tribes of Indians which occupy the extensive plains in this neighbourhood are both numerous and powerful, and are also in better circumstances than their brethren in other parts of the country.

Mr. Rundle has the honour of being the first Protestant Missionary who has been stationed amongst them. He reached Edmonton-House on the 18th of September, 1840, after having traversed, from the time of his landing at New-York, about 3,500 miles. He received a most cordial welcome from the officer in charge, and immediately commenced his Missionary labours and toils among the surrounding tribes, in humble dependence upon Him who hath said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

His reception by the Indians, also, has been highly interesting and encouraging. Wherever he goes, both Chiefs and people are alike eager to hear the word of

life. In some instances, distant tribes, having heard of his arrival, have not waited till he should visit them, but have set off in large parties to visit him, and to hear the Gospel from his lips. After addressing one of these parties, on some important Scripture subjects, an Indian remarked, that they resembled hungry young birds in a nest, when visited by the parent: like the young birds, he said, they stood hungry, with their mouths open, waiting to be fed.

Thus, notwithstanding that in some places the prospect is not so cheering, it is evident, that a great door and effectual is now opened among these nations, for the Gospel, with all its blessings for time and eternity. Many more instances of conversion might have been selected from the journals of the Missionaries; but what is here presented to the reader will suffice to show, that the Gospel is proving itself to be "the power of God unto salvation" by their ministration. One more extract, only, shall be given, to show, not only the earnest desire of the Indians to hear the word of God, but their ingenuity, also, in overcoming difficulties in the way of hearing it with comfort.

Mr. Barnsley, writing from Moose-Factory, January 14th, 1842, says,—“My ministry here was commenced in the open air; but the weather being very boisterous, as well as cold, it became highly desirable to find some means for sheltering ourselves from its inclemency. For this emergency I was totally unprepared; but the Indians soon overcame the difficulty, by throwing three or four of their tents into one, and thus formed an apartment about fifty feet in length, and ten feet wide at the base. My mind was forcibly impressed with the resemblance between some of our circumstances and those of the ancient Israelites, shortly after their exodus. The congregation was encamped on a sandy plain, with a lofty mountain, like another Sinai, rising in our immediate neighbourhood. Here a tabernacle was constructed for the worship of Jehovah, by the contributions of the people, who, as far as their ability enabled, and necessity

required them, had wrought with a willing heart in its execution ; and a people who had endured a long night of ignorance and bondage, were called upon to listen to new and wonderful discoveries of God and of religion from the lips of the first messenger who had been specifically commissioned to teach them the ordinances and commandments of the Lord."

As among the Canadian Indians, native teachers have been raised up, so, among these more remote tribes, the same means will be adopted as early as possible. One Canadian Indian is now employed in preaching the Gospel to them ; and some of them, in return, we trust, will soon be engaged in extending the work around them. The seed thus sown will continue to bring forth fruit. Peace and good-will will drive war and discord far away. The preaching of the cross, the only efficient means of civilizing, as well as of saving man, will draw them from their wandering life, and fix them together in peaceful towns and villages ; the soil will be cultivated, and their outward condition rendered comfortable, as far as climate and other circumstances will allow ; so that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

This tract, however, gives a sketch of only one of the smaller and detached fields of Missionary exertion in the present day. There is India, with its teeming millions, ready for the Gospel. China itself slowly unbars its long-shut gates to the ambassadors of Christ ; and long-injured Africa, from her blood-stained shores, cries aloud for the Gospel, as the only effectual means of deliverance from the horrors of slavery, and of obtaining happiness and peace ; many of the islands of the sea are rejoicing in the knowledge of the Saviour, — and many more are waiting for his law. So that when we look on the state of the nations which need, and many of which earnestly desire, the Gospel, or at the men who forego the comforts of civilized and Christian society to meet their wants and wishes, the cause of Missions has a powerful claim for encouragement and support. From the polar

regions to the equator, exertions are made ; and in every place the blessing of God, in a greater or less degree, produces success, which may be regarded as the harbinger of that foretold and happy period, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." And who does not desire to hasten that glorious event? Every honourable motive calls us to engage in this work. If we honour God, love our Saviour, wish well to our fellow-creatures, perishing for want of the Gospel, and desire to promote their present and eternal happiness, or be approved by Christ at last, as those who have not scattered from him, but gathered to him,—then we must be ready to support, and pray for the prosperity of, Christian Missions.

Perhaps the reader is young, and full of anxiety and hope regarding the things of this world. O be persuaded to take the counsel of your Redeemer : "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Attach yourself resolutely to his cause and people. Let all your associations and habits become decidedly Christian in early life. Hereby you honour God, and he will honour you by divine direction. Who can tell whether he may not intend you to occupy some honourable and important station in the field of Missions, or in some other department of his great work of saving men? But you frustrate his design so long as you hold back your heart from him : and much, nay, everything, even your own salvation, may depend upon immediate obedience to his heavenly call.

But if the shadows of life's evening begin to lengthen, and the great business of conversion is still neglected, the reader must beware, lest, while many shall come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, he himself should be cast out. The Saviour himself assures us, that then it will be in vain to plead, "Lord, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;" for he

will answer, "I know you not; depart from me." Let each, then, make his own "calling and election sure," and endeavour, as far as in his power, to promote the salvation of his fellow-men; so that, having been associated with the Redeemer in his warfare against the powers of darkness on earth, he may partake in the glory and joy of his triumphs, when he shall come in his glory to judge the world, and to be "glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."



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- of the Dogribbed tribe.

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London: R. Needham, Printer, Paternoster-Row.